

THIN CLAYPAN RANGE SITE

1. TOPOGRAPHY

- a. This site occurs on nearly level to moderately sloping uplands and terraces. Slopes are commonly from 0 to 9 percent.

2. SOILS

- a. These soils have thin surfaces underlain by hardpan. Subsoils contain high sodium accumulations. Permeability is very slow. Available water capacity is low. Areas of thin topsoil may be devoid of vegetation and appear as 'slick spots.'

- b. Soil taxonomic units common to this site are:

Absher loam and clay loam

Rhoades loam, silty clay loam, and silty clay

Refer to Section II-A for a complete list of soil taxonomic units and range sites.

3. POTENTIAL VEGETATION

- a. Shortgrasses dominate the general appearance of this site. The principal species are western wheatgrass, blue grama, prairie junegrass, and Sandberg bluegrass. Other species are needleand-thread, inland saltgrass, needleleaf sedge, and other upland sedges. Small amounts of forbs are common to the site. Shrub species make up to 10 percent of the total herbage production.
- b. Continued heavy grazing by cattle causes a decrease of species such as western wheatgrass and prairie junegrass. A corresponding increase of plants such as blue grama, Sandberg bluegrass, buffalograss, upland sedges, and fringed sagebrush occurs. Continued deterioration results in a dominance of shortgrasses, upland sedges, fringed sagebrush, broom snakeweed, and undesirable forbs.
- c. Approximate total annual production of this site in excellent condition is from 300 to 750 pounds of air-dry herbage per acre, depending on growing conditions. Percent of the ground that is covered by living or dead vegetation is about 60 to 85 percent.

2--Thin Claypan Range Site

- d. A detailed description of the vegetation in excellent condition is as follows:

Relative Percent Composition of the Potential Vegetation

	Mean Productivity	
	lbs/acre	% composition
Grasses		
Western wheatgrass	138	25
Blue grama	195	35
Prairie junegrass	27	5
Sandberg bluegrass	27	5
Buffalograss	27	5
Needleandthread	27	5
Inland saltgrass		
Other grasses		
Grasslikes		
Needleleaf sedge	27	5
Other sedges		
Forbs		
Rush skeletonplant	27	5
Large goatsbeard		
Scarlet globemallow		
Other forbs		
Shrubs and half-shrubs		
Fringed sagebrush	55	10
Broom snakeweed		
Common winterfat		
Big sagebrush		
Pricklypear cactus		
Other shrubs		
Total	550	100

4. DOMESTIC LIVESTOCK GRAZING VALUE

- a. This site has a very low stocking rate potential. Plant cover is easily destroyed by overuse and recovery is slow. The best season of use is fall for maintaining good plant cover. Cattle are more suitable than sheep due to lack of plant diversity and sparseness of stand

3--Thin Claypan Range Site

5. WILDLIFE NATIVE TO THE SITE

- a. This site provides some forage for mule deer, white-tailed deer, and antelope. Sites having browse such as sagebrush species are more desirable for big game animals as well as birds. Small mammals common to this site are the jackrabbit, badger, and prairie dog. Upland birds that are commonly found are the sharp-tailed grouse, mourning dove, meadowlark, and horned lark.

6. ESTHETIC AND RELATED VALUES

- a. The esthetic values of this range site are commonly enhanced by the surrounding and/or intermingled sites that add more plant variety. This site is usually in complex with other range sites. Certain species of wildlife such as the prairie dog and burrowing owl are attracted to this site for its sparse cover.

7. HYDROLOGIC CHARACTERISTICS

- a. Runoff is slow to medium on good and excellent condition, properly grazed range. Water transmission rate of the soil is very slow.

8. A TYPICAL SITE LOCATION IN THIS AREA IS AS FOLLOWS

